

Mercury in Fish

Fish collected by various state agencies have been examined for Mercury at the Utah Public Health Laboratory since November of 2005. So far, 850 locations have been tested, but more samples are pending. Testing performed by our laboratory on fish fillets indicates that on the average, 1 fish in 12 can be expected to exceed the Health Advisory Level for Mercury of 0.3 milligrams per kilogram (0.3 parts per million).

Mercury levels can also be expected to vary with the species of fish. Fish predators (piscivores) generally accumulate higher mercury levels than non predator fish. The amount of fish which can be safely eaten depends upon mercury concentrations found, the frequency one eats a fish meal per month (number of four ounce meals consumed per month), and the age and sex of the consumer. Infants, pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, and nursing mothers may be in susceptible groups where caution is urged.

In August of 2007, a new web site was developed by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to discuss Mercury issues and investigational activities (<http://www.fishadvisories.utah.gov/>).